

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2580

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 2750

AF/E FOR AMBASSADOR BREWER FROM COUNTRY TEAM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, PGOV SU

SUBJECT: SUDAN SINCE THE COUP ATTEMPT-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

REF: KHARTOUM 2749

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAVE BEEN DOMINATED BY A HIGHLY PRO-EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND US TONE SINCE LAST JULY AND CONCOMITANTLY A DEEP CHILL IN RELATIONS WITH LIBYA AND THE SOVIET UNION. BEHIND SUDAN'S FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE US LIES THE PERCEPTION OF LOCAL LEADERS THAT THESE FEW COUNTRIES PLUS TWO OR THREE OTHERS HOLD THE KEY TO SUDAN'S CONTINUED SECURITY AND ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

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2. DESPITE THE CRISIS IN LEBANON, DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE, EACH OF WHICH SUDAN EITHER INVOLVED WITH OR INTERESTED IN, PRIMARY FOCUS OF ATTENTION SINCE LAST SPRING HAS BEEN ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. NEVERTHELESS, SUDAN HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN DEVELOPING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH SELECTED COUNTRIES. MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE ARE EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND TO A GREAT EXTENT FROM KHARTOUM'S VANTAGE POINT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. BOTH, OF COURSE, ARE CLOSE AND STRONG ARAB NEIGHBORS OF SUDAN. EGYPT IS KEY ARAB COUNTRY POLITICALLY, AND THERE ARE DEEP AND STRONG EGYPTIAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TIES WITH SUDAN. SIMILARLY FOR RELIGIOUS AND OTHER REASONS SAUDI ARABIA HAS SPECIAL IMPORTANCE FOR SUDAN. SINCE COUP, POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND, IN CASE EGYPT, FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THESE COUNTRIES HAS BEEN CONSIDERED CRUCIAL. FORMAL MILITARY/POLITICAL COOPERATION ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN CREATED WITH EGYPT. SAG APPARENTLY PREFERS TO BE LESS FORMAL BUT VERY CLOSE AND REAL CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP EXISTS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, SAUDI AND EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE ON SUDANESE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NOTABLY IN POLITICAL/MILITARY AREA, BECOMING EVIDENT.

3. SINCE RETURN FROM US, NIMEIRI HAS ALSO PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH US. GOS WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP MILITARY RELATIONS WITH US, BUT FOR NOW PRIMARY EMPHASIS IS ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS. SUDAN SEES INJECTION OF US RESOURCES AND SKILLS, WHETHER THROUGH USG PROGRAMS OR THROUGH PRIVATE SEMINAR AS LIKELY TO BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT EFFORT NOW GETTING UNDERWAY. IT WAS IN PURSUIT OF THIS GOAL THAT NIMEIRI VISITED US LAST JUNE. NOW GOS MAKING STRONG EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE ON CONTACTS MADE AT THAT TIME, AND THERE IS EVIDENCE OF IMPORTANT MOVES WITHIN GOS TO ATTRACT AND FACILITATE US INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN SUDAN.

4. IN CONTRAST WITH GOOD RELATIONS WITH US, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA IS TERRIBLE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA WHICH
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SEEN AS POWER BEHIND JULY COUP ATTEMPT. PERHAPS OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO US IS RECENT STRONGLY ANTI-SOVIET CHARACTER OF GOS. APART FROM LIBYA, SUDAN'S WORST RELATIONS NOW WITH ANY COUNTRY WITH WHICH IT TRADITIONALLY HAS HAD NORMAL OR EVEN GOOD RELATIONS IS USSR (AND SOME OF ITS EAST EUROPEAN ALLIES). (SEPTTEL WILL DISCUSS SUDAN-USSR RELATIONS IN MORE DETAIL.)

5. GENERALLY, SUDAN'S OFFER RELATIONS ARE GOOD AND NOT NOTICEABLY AFFECTED BY COUP. RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, WHICH NIMEIRI VISITED ON WAY HOME FROM US, APPEAR TO BE QUITE GOOD AND EXPANDING, PERHAPS INCLUDING MILITARILY. RELATIONS WITH UK ARE MIXED; THERE REMAINS SOME ILL FEELING HERE OVER BBC BROADCAST OF INTERVIEW WITH COUP LEADER SADDIQ-AL-MAHDI, BUT NIMEIRI WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GAINING RELEASE OF BRITISH JOURNALIST FROM ERITREAN REBELS. BILATERALLY AND THROUGH EEC EUROPEANS ARE MAKING MAJOR COMMITMENT OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SUDAN. TYPICALLY SUDAN TRYING TO KEEP OUT OF INTER-ARAB POLITICS, ALTHOUGH SOME OF ITS FORCES ARE PART OF ARAB LEAGUE PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN LEBANON WHERE THEY HAVE SUSTAINED SOME CASUALTIES. IN AFRICA, SUDAN REMAINS CONCERNED OVER SITUATION IN ERITREA AND REST OF ETHIOPIA, AND IT LEARNED THIS SUMMER THAT CRISIS BETWEEN KENYA AND UGANDA CAN CAUSE HARMFUL EFFECTS TO SUDAN. IN GENERAL, VOS UNEASY OVER HORN OF AFRICA SITUATION.

6. COMMENT: SUDAN WOULD SEEM TO BE JUSTIFIABLY ANGRY AT LIBYA FOR ITS ROLE IN COUP ATTEMPT, AND USSR'S SUPPORT OF LIBYA, NOT TO MENTION PAST COMMUNIST HISTORY HERE, MAKE GOS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF MOSCOW. AS IT HAPPENS THESE VIEWS ARE APPARENTLY SHARED IN RIYADH AND CAIRO, AND THEY THEREFORE CAN BE ACCEPTED HERE THAT MUCH MORE EASILY. IN CASE OF EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, US, FRANCE, KUWAIT AND OTHERS, SUDAN WANTS GOOD RELATIONS FOR EASY-TO-UNDERSTWAND REASON THAT EACH OF THESE COUNTRIES CAN MAKE GENUINE AND IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY'S SECURITY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. VISITS BY FOREIGN OFFICIALS OR BUSINESSMEN FROM THESE COUNTRIES AS WELL AS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS OF LOANS OR INVESTMENTS ARE CITED AS PROOF OF FAITH IMPORTANT FOREIGN ELEMENTS HAVE IN REGIME AND IN LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR SUDAN ITSELF. BOGOSIAN

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